

V. CULTURAL CONTEXTS

A. REGIONAL PREHISTORY

The prehistory of Delaware has been divided into four periods: the Paleoindian period (ca. 12,000 BC-6500 BC), the Archaic period (ca. 6500 BC-3000 BC), the Woodland I period (ca. 3000 BC-AD 1000), and the Woodland II period (ca. AD 1000-AD 1650). The time frame between AD 1600 and approximately AD 1750 marks the final years of Native American occupation of the area, during early European colonization of the state (Custer 1984, 1986).

The Paleoindian period (ca. 12,000 BC-6500 BC) marks the initial occupation of the state by small groups of nomadic Native American hunters and gatherers. Their presence coincided with the transition from ameliorating late Pleistocene glacial environmental conditions to the onset of early Holocene conditions, with cool temperatures and alternating levels of precipitation. The economic system of the Paleoindians was based largely upon the hunting of large, cold-adapted animals, including both migratory and non-migratory species. Although direct evidence of Paleoindian use of non-mammalian food resources is lacking in the archaeological record of Delaware, paleoenvironmental data indicate that their exploitative territories included habitats in which plant foods and other edible resources were available. Palynological and geomorphological data suggest that the vegetation in Delaware during the Paleoindian period consisted of a mosaic comprised of deciduous and boreal forests and grasslands that would have provided grazing, browsing, and shelter for a variety of small and large mammals. Where they coincided with surface water settings, these habitats would have been focal points for Paleoindian foragers.

The stone toolkit of the Paleoindians was characterized by a limited number of bifacial and unifacial implements that suggest a heavy emphasis on the procurement and processing of animal resources. These include projectile points, hafted and unhafted knives, scrapers, and less formalized flake tools. Of these, the fluted point is the diagnostic hallmark of the Paleoindian period. Other point styles indicative of the later part of this cultural period include both unfluted triangular forms and notched and stemmed points. The distributions and environmental settings of Paleoindian sites and isolated point finds suggest that these people maintained a lifestyle that consisted of relatively frequent movements of single or multiple family groups to and from resource-rich habitats. It appears that this basic settlement/subsistence strategy persisted with only minor variations for approximately 5,500 years.

Custer has identified a concentration of Paleoindian sites along the Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide of the Delmarva Peninsula. Using modern LANDSAT imagery, Paleoindian site loci were found to be strongly correlated with poorly drained or swampy areas. The Hughes Complex in Kent County exemplifies this Paleoindian site distributional pattern. This complex includes a series of six surface finds located on low, well-drained knolls within or adjacent to a large freshwater swamp and other poorly drained areas (Custer 1986:49-51).

The Archaic period (ca. 6500 BC-3000 BC) is characterized by a series of changes in prehistoric Native American technologies, subsistence, and settlement. These shifts are interpreted as gradual human responses to the emergence of full Holocene environmental conditions. The landscape was dominated by mesic oak and hemlock forests. Reductions in open grasslands brought about by warm and wet conditions resulted in the extinction of certain cold-adapted grazing animal species (i.e., caribou and bison) that were the favored prey of Paleoindian groups. Alternatively, these vegetational changes were favorable to browsing animals, such as deer, which flourish in such settings (Custer 1984, 1986).

A rise in the sea level and an increase in precipitation at the beginning of the Holocene would have facilitated the development of inland swamps within the Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide. At that time, Native American populations in these locales shifted from the more hunting-oriented foraging pattern of the Paleoindian period to one in which plant foods became a more important part of their economies. In southern Delaware, large swamp habitats such as Cedar Swamp and Burnt Swamp would have served as locations for the first large residential base camps, possibly occupied by several different family groups. Associated with these larger group camps are more numerous and smaller procurement sites situated in various settings that would have been favorable for hunting and gathering activities during different seasons of the year.

Archaic toolkits differ from those of the Paleoindian period in that they include a number of artifacts indicative of plant food processing (i.e., grinding implements and stone mortars). Although Archaic groups in Delaware appear to have been less mobile than Paleoindian populations, they were more mobile than later Woodland period groups. The sizes of Archaic exploitative groups seem to have fluctuated seasonally and with the availability of food resources.

Based upon palynological and geomorphological data from the Middle Atlantic region, the Woodland I period (ca. 3000 BC-AD 1000) has been described as a time of "dramatic change in local climates and environments," in which "a pronounced warm and dry period" (i.e., a mid-postglacial xerothermic) began at approximately 3000 BC and persisted to approximately 1000 BC (Custer and Bachman 1984). During that period, the mesic oak-hemlock forests of the Archaic were replaced by more drought-resistant (xeric) oak and hickory forests and more abundant grasslands. Although these conditions resulted in the drying up of some interior streams, continued sea level rise resulted in the creation of large and highly productive brackish marshes. In essence, the xerothermic is hypothesized to have caused shifts in the distributions of plant and animal species and the establishment of new resource-rich settings in some areas of the state.

In turn, these proposed shifts in climate, environmental conditions, and resource distributions are believed to have resulted in radical changes among resident prehistoric Native American populations in the study area, including a trend toward greater sedentism and more complex systems of social organization and interactions. For example, major river floodplains and estuarine swamp habitats became the primary resource zones and the locations of large residential base camps occupied on a multiseasonal or year-round basis. Such sites are particularly prominent in northern Delaware; they include the Delaware Park Site, the Clyde Farm Site, the

Crane Hook Site, and the Naamans Creek Site. Artifact assemblages and features from these sites suggest intensive utilization by prehistoric populations and a trend toward more sedentary lifeways. In southern Delaware, there was an increase in the utilization of shellfish in the coastal areas, concurrent with an inland shift in the locations of macroband base camps along the tidal drainages. Within the Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide zone, there is little evidence that site distribution patterns changed from the preceding Archaic period (Custer 1986).

The toolkits of Woodland I groups contrast with those of the Archaic by the addition of such items as heavy woodworking tools, soapstone and ceramic containers, broad-bladed points, and netsinkers. The increased abundance of plant-processing tools over the preceding period suggests more intensive utilization of plant foods, which by the end of Woodland I times may have approached the level of productive intensification. The presence of nonlocal lithic materials such as argillite, rhyolite, and soapstone is interpreted as an indicator of incipient regional trade and exchange networks. Soapstone and ceramic vessels are viewed as items that facilitated more efficient food preparation and storage of surplus foods. Pit features employed for food storage and the remains of prehistoric dwellings have been documented at the Delaware Park and Clyde Farm sites in northern Delaware.

The inferred reduction in overall group mobility, the presence of certain artifact types indicative of intensified resource processing, the possible generation of food surpluses, the presence of artifact caches, and the possible existence of increased interregional exchange networks as inferred from the presence of nonlocal lithic raw materials, are interpreted as indicators of the initial development of ranked social organization as opposed to earlier egalitarian systems.

The Woodland II period (ca. AD 1000-AD 1650) within the Middle Atlantic region is marked primarily by the development of horticulture and increased sedentism. During this period, villages became larger and more permanent and tended to be located adjacent to areas with easily worked floodplain soils. This period is also characterized by a reduction in the interregional trade and exchange systems.

Two Woodland II complexes have been defined for Delaware. In southern Delaware, the Slaughter Creek Complex is characterized by the presence of Townsend ceramics, triangular projectile points, large macroband base camps, and possibly fully sedentary villages with numerous food storage features. Most major sites assigned to the Slaughter Creek Complex have been identified in the Delaware Shore, Mid-Drainage, and Coastal/Bay physiographic zones of southern Delaware. In northern Delaware, Custer calls the dominant Woodland II culture the Minguannan Complex (Custer 1989:311-316). The identifying characteristics of this complex include Minguannan ceramics (a hard, grit-tempered, high-fired variety similar to Potomac Creek), small triangular points, and frequent storage pits. Although agriculture and settled village life developed in this period in southern Delaware and in the Middle Atlantic region generally, there is no evidence of either of these important changes in northern Delaware. The large sites of the Woodland II period in northern Delaware are in the same environmental contexts as those of earlier periods, oriented toward wetlands rather than toward good agricultural land. In many cases, earlier sites continued to be occupied in the Woodland II period, including the Hell Island,

Delaware Park, and Clyde Farm sites (Custer 1984; Thomas 1966, 1980). The evidence suggests that there was no major change in lifeways in northern Delaware in this period, and that the inhabitants continued to rely on hunting and gathering, especially in marsh areas, for their sustenance. Ethnographic data about the Lenape, who occupied the area at the time of European contact, tend to support this conclusion (Stewart et al. 1986; Weslager 1972).

The Contact period (ca. AD 1600-AD 1750) is marked by both the initial contact between the Native American inhabitants of Delaware and European colonists, and the total collapse of traditional native lifeways and sociopolitical organization. The picture is further complicated by the paucity of sites dating to this important period within the state. However, historical sources indicate that resident Native American populations had minimal interaction with European settlers and were subjugated by the Susquehannock Indians of southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. A small number of descendants of the original Native American inhabitants of Delaware still reside in the state today.

B. REGIONAL HISTORY

In 1638, Swedish settlers established Fort Christina, at the confluence of the Christina River and Brandywine Creek in what is now Wilmington, Delaware. Fort Christina, the first permanent European settlement in Delaware, soon became the nucleus of scattered settlements of Swedish and Finnish farmers known as New Sweden (Coleman et al. 1987:19). In 1651, the Dutch established Fort Casimir, near present-day New Castle, Delaware, in an attempt to block Swedish efforts to control commerce on the Delaware River (Hodny et al. 1989:19). In 1657, as a result of peaceful negotiations, the City of Amsterdam acquired Fort Casimir from the West India Company and established a city called New Amstel (New Castle) nearby (Coleman et al. 1987:19).

English rule of the region began in 1664, when Sir Robert Carr attacked the Dutch settlement at New Amstel. Former Dutch magistrates continued in office under English authority, and Swedes, Finns, and Dutch all accepted the rule of the Duke of York through his appointed governors. In 1682, the granting of proprietary rights to William Penn and his representatives gave economic and political control of Delaware to Philadelphia, which became the new seat of government for the region (Munroe 1978, cited in Coleman et al. 1987:21).

Dutch land grants were characteristically laid out in narrow strips from stream to stream, forming a distinctly recognizable land pattern. This pattern of development was already in place on the neck between Appoquinimink and Drawyer creeks when the English took over the Dutch colonies in 1664. Appoquinimink Neck attracted early Dutch and Swedish settlers because of its location on a trade route between the Dutch Delaware River settlements and the English Chesapeake Bay settlements. The primary trade item was Maryland tobacco. In about 1660, a road was laid out as a portage between Bohemia Creek, which drained into the Chesapeake Bay, and landings on Drawyer and Appoquinimink creeks, which drain into the Delaware River. The head of navigation on Bohemia Creek developed into the settlement of Bohemia Mills, Maryland. Just five miles to the east was the uppermost landing on Appoquinimink Creek, at Silver Lake, to

which a branch of the cart road was laid. The main Bohemia Cart Road, also known as "Herman's Cart Road," is the antecedent of Route 299, the road linking Middletown to Odessa (Scharf 1888:991).

A Dutch government official, Alexander De Hinijossa, was in the process of establishing his residence on a plantation on the site of Odessa when the English took control. Confiscation of his property derailed his plans for establishing a town on Appoquinimink Creek. Not all of the Dutch landholdings were confiscated, however. Because earlier Swedish and Dutch land grants were voided by the English takeover, settlers were ordered to obtain a reconfirmation of their patents. Most of the patents for land in Appoquinimink Neck date to 1671, the year when detailed land records were first recorded in the region.

The Dutch settlement system was gradually replaced by the English colonial settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads along roads, usually granted in 500-acre parcels, with population concentrations living in nearby villages (Coleman et al. 1987:21). In the late seventeenth century, William Penn and his agents aggressively promoted immigration into the Lower Delaware River Valley, resulting in a large number of Welsh and English settlers moving into New Castle County, Delaware. In 1701, a charter formally separated Delaware's three counties from Pennsylvania (Herman 1987:5).

The two most important towns to develop in St. Georges Hundred were Odessa and Middletown. The nucleus of Odessa's development was a bridge built by Richard Cantwell over Appoquinimink Creek in the 1730s. He was the grandson of Edmund Cantwell, one of Appoquinimink's most wealthy and politically active citizens, who acquired 2,600 acres of land along the southern side of Appoquinimink Creek by the time of his death in 1698. The development of the village at the bridge crossing was further encouraged by the laying out of the lower King's Highway through Odessa in 1764. By 1825, Cantwell's Bridge was an important transshipment point for grain, principally sent to market in Philadelphia. Local citizens felt a change to the name of "Odessa," an important grain port on the Black Sea, was warranted. Odessa's fortunes declined after construction of the Delaware Railroad siphoned off the grain trade (Scharf 1888:1005).

Middletown was founded by Adam Peterson, the Swedish progenitor of a large family whose descendants still live in the area. The first tract, "Middletown," in what became a large plantation was patented in 1678. The old Peterson homestead in Middletown reportedly survived into the present century. In 1761, a tavern was built in Middletown on the old Bohemia Cart Road. A crossroads was created when the upper King's Highway was laid out past the tavern in 1764. A village developed around the crossroads, and by 1800, the population had grown to about 120 (Scharf 1888:993; Watkins n.d.).

During the late eighteenth century, the population of Delaware grew steadily. Delaware's population in 1790 was 59,096. Ten years later, the population had risen to 64,273, with almost the entire increase occurring in New Castle County. The total population of St. Georges Hundred in 1800 consisted of 3,365 persons, 481 of which were slaves and another 484 of which were

categorized as free persons (Rogers and Easter 1960:62). With the population increasing, the number of school-age children also increased. By 1829, St. Georges Hundred had established a public school system (Conrad 1908:547). At that time, new school houses were erected, and old ones which had previously been private schools were converted for public use (Scharf 1888:992).

The earliest industrial pursuit practiced in St. Georges Hundred was gristmilling. Early mills were custom mills, grinding flour for farmers for a fee. These mills are considered a by-product of the agricultural production which was occurring, rather than an early expression of manufacturing within the hundred (Munroe 1954:27). Odessa was the primary grain-milling center for St. Georges Hundred, despite the fact that in the late nineteenth century, Willow Grove Mill was situated approximately halfway between Odessa and Middletown on Appoquinimink Creek.

In 1829, the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal was completed (Reed 1947:377). This waterway was seen as a major transportation improvement for New Castle County and its farming community. New transportation methods and routes, such as canals and railroads, became feasible in part because of the increased population pressures in settled areas and the growing demand for agricultural products (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992:212).

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, houses built in New Castle County were usually one room or hall-and-parlor plan, and of frame construction (New Castle County Department of Planning 1994:23). Houses of brick construction were usually owned by wealthy individuals. Throughout the nineteenth century, New Castle County houses experienced a general rebuilding and restructuring, which was first seen in 1820 with the incorporation of service wings into the main house block (Herman 1987:2, 8). The significant changes in the architecture of rural New Castle County were more particularly expressed in the way that older frame dwellings and tenements were replaced or rebuilt on new locations (Bowers 1987:13-14). Specifically, from 1820 to 1870, there was much remodeling of existing structures and outbuildings. This included the replacement of old buildings and outbuildings, and the substantial remodeling of recently constructed buildings (Herman 1987:12). The two sections of Locust Grove are an excellent example of this phenomenon.

Landed farmers throughout the area typically maintained village dwellings for themselves in addition to their farmhouses. Samuel Pennington was no exception, owning several houses and lots in Middletown, and maintaining several farms outside of town. Between 1850 and 1860, Middletown grew rapidly. The opening of the railroad to Middletown in the mid-1850s established it as the economic focus of St. Georges Hundred, enabling it to grow from a crossroads village to a large and fashionable town (Herman et al. 1985:125). On February 12, 1861, the town, which supported several banks, a canning factory, a brickyard, hotels, and stores, was incorporated as a municipality (Scharf 1888:994).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the intensive agricultural activity occurring in St. Georges Hundred made it, along with Red Lion and New Castle hundreds, one of the wealthiest hundreds

in Delaware. During this period, larger farms within St. Georges Hundred were cultivating wheat, corn, and oats, and raising cattle for dairy products, meat, and hides (Herman 1987:114).

In an effort to increase production, more farmers were purchasing machinery and employing larger numbers of day laborers. As a result, the wealth the farmers gained was evidenced by the large number of home improvements occurring throughout St. Georges Hundred in the nineteenth century (Herman et al. 1985:8-3).

Between 1830 and 1870, Delaware was the center of peach production in the eastern United States, with farms in St. Georges Hundred producing a large portion of the total yield. This shift in agricultural production occurred in response to the fact that the major grain-producing and milling centers had permanently moved west. To compensate for eroding markets and falling prices, the farmers of St. Georges Hundred turned to orchard crops, especially peaches, as an "agricultural panacea" (Herman et al. 1985:8-5). An 1870 peach blight, known as the "yellows," caused the widespread failure of peach orchards (De Cunzo 1993:21). The peach blight forced late nineteenth-century farmers to diversify their crops, planting grains such as wheat, corn, and oats, and specializing in more perishable market produce (Scharf 1888:982). Some farmers who had devoted all of their resources to peaches never recovered.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, changes in the agricultural practices of Delaware farmers continued. Responding to the demands of markets in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, many farmers began raising more perishable crops, such as strawberries, apples, tomatoes, and potatoes (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992:27). By 1900, over 50 percent of Delaware's farmers were tenants or sharecroppers. From that point forward, tenancy remained a dominant farming practice in Delaware, with farm owners rarely farming the land or occupying the farmhouse (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992:28).

C. LOCUST GROVE

The site of Locust Grove was in the possession of the Peterson family by the middle of the eighteenth century. The home plantation of Adam Peterson was located on the site of Middletown. Adam Peterson also owned one of the narrow tracts between Appoquinimink and Drawyer creeks, the site of Locust Grove (Figure 7). Adam had five children who lived during the first half of the eighteenth century: Adam, Jr., Andrew, Hermania, Hilitie, and Garret, names which were often repeated among their descendants. Hermania married Matthias Van Bibber, a Maryland merchant. Each of her brothers married a niece of Matthias Van Bibber: Andrew to Hester Van Bibber, and Adam to Veronica Van Bibber Birmingham. Adam Peterson's estate was divided equally between the five children.

Andrew Peterson died in 1740. He had 11 children, and was survived by his third wife, Hester. One of his daughters, Elinor, married Richard Cantwell, the builder of Cantwell's Bridge. Elinor's share of her father's estate was a woodland tract of 125 acres rented by Isaac Reall. Both Elinor and her husband died intestate, and their property was inherited by their two children, Richard and Lydia. In 1761, the Cantwell children sold the 125 acres of woodland to Robert Meldrum for £330.18.04 (New Castle County [NCC] Deed Book W-1:94) (Table 1).

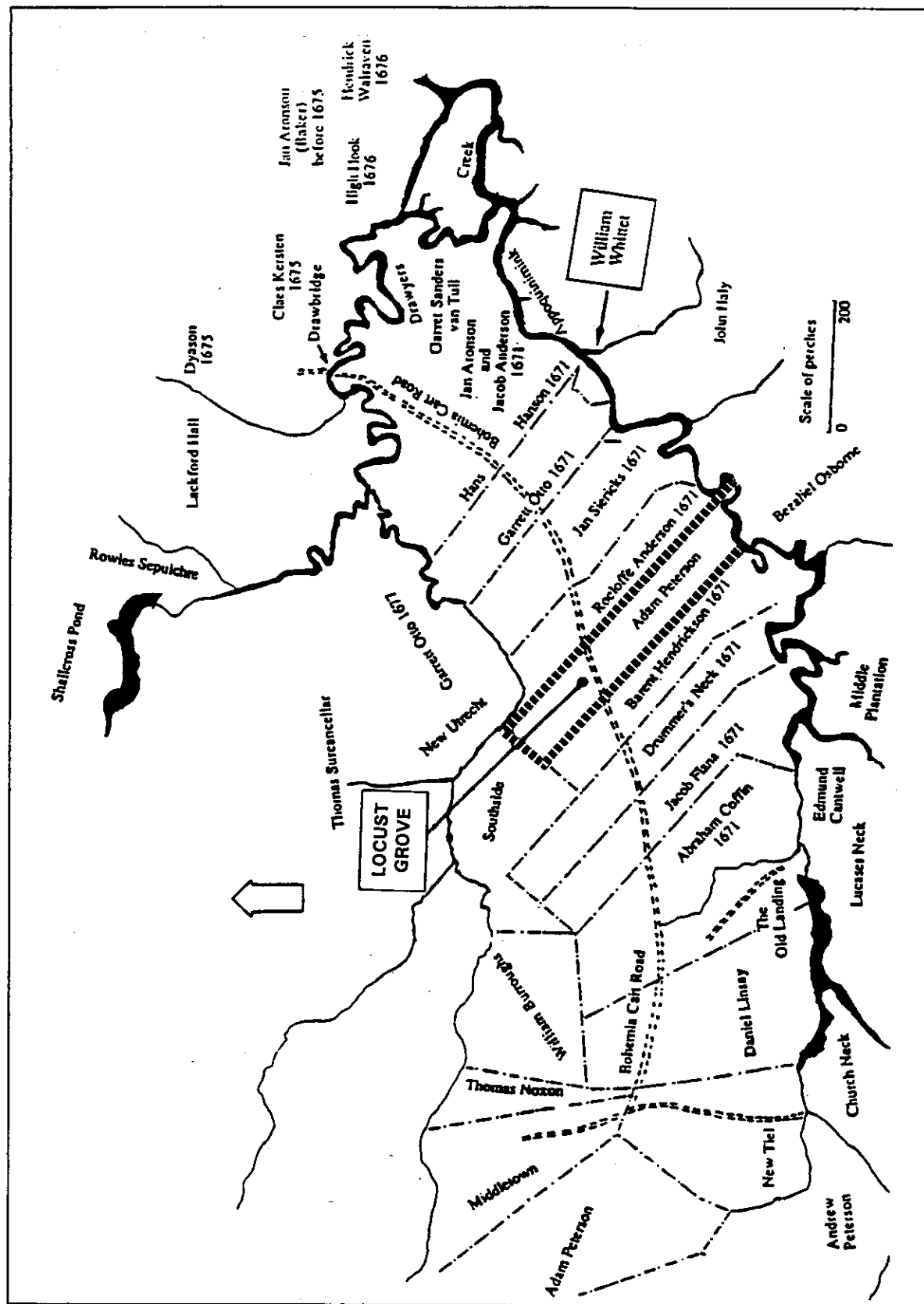


FIGURE 7: One of Adam Peterson's Patents; Site of Locust Grove

Source: Heite 1972, Reproduced in DeCunzio 1993

TABLE 1
CHAIN OF TITLE, LOCUST GROVE SITE (7NC-F-73)

DATE	TRANSACTION
1993	Wallace I. Harris, Jr., and Ruth L. Harris, to the State of Delaware October 14, 1993; recorded October 14, 1993 Tax Parcel 13-023.00-084, containing 3.60 acres \$225,000 New Castle County (NCC) Deed Book 1604:097
1980	Walter C. Guseman, Jr., and Lavina M. Guseman, to Wallace I. Harris, Jr., and Ruth L. Harris March 21, 1980; recorded March 24, 1980 \$60,000 3.595 acres on north side of Delaware Route 299 NCC Deed Book R-109:83
1968	Walter C. and Thelma Guseman, to Walter C. Guseman, Jr., and Lavina M. Guseman December 16, 1968; recorded December 23, 1968 \$10 XXX NCC Deed Book U-81:128
1939	William Lee and Harriet Pennington, Emma P. and Francis Richards, to Walter C. Guseman of Cecil County, Maryland January 11, 1939; recorded January 14, 1939 \$9,500 222-acre farm on north side of Delaware Route 299 NCC Deed Book D-41:551
1938	Marjorie M. Rawling, widow, John E. and Lucille Waidlich of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, to William Lee Pennington, Addie P. Voshell, Madeline P. Bates, and Emma P. Richards October 15, 1938; October 26, 1938 241 acres on north side of Delaware Route 299 NCC Deed Book B-41:460 Francis M. and Emma P. Richards of Philadelphia, to Madeline P. and Roland Bates of Middletown July 11, 1938; recorded August 11, 1938 All the estate, right, title, and claim of the said Francis M. Richards, to the undivided estate of Franklin J. Pennington, deceased NCC Deed Book A-41:371
1937	Death of Geneva Pennington Will written May 2, 1930; proved January 25, 1937 Bequeathed her entire estate to her children, William Lee Pennington, Addie P. Voshell, Madeline P. Bates, and Emma P. Richards NCC Will File #20405
1929	Roland W. and Madeline P. Bates, to F.M. Richards of Philadelphia July 26, 1929; recorded July 29, 1929 <i>All the estate, right, title, and claim of the said Madeline P. Bates to the undivided estate of Franklin J. Pennington</i> NCC Deed Book K-36:501

Table 1 (continued)

DATE	TRANSACTION
1926	<p>Death of Franklin J. Pennington</p> <p>Will written March 21, 1921; proved October 15, 1926</p> <p>Bequeathed his entire estate to his wife, Geneva, as long as she remains a widow. Upon her death or remarriage, the entire estate goes to his children. 300-acre farm valued at \$20,000, with a \$10,000 mortgage.</p> <p>NCC Will File #13319</p>
1900	<p>Franklin J. Pennington, to Cora Reynolds</p> <p>XXX; recorded May 12, 1900</p> <p>\$5,039.17</p> <p>The will of Samuel Pennington, Jr., specified that Franklin J. Pennington receive the 300-acre farm on the north side of the road from Middletown to Odessa. His possession of this land was subject to the payment of \$5,000 plus interest to his sister, Cora Reynolds.</p> <p>NCC Deed Book H-18:34</p>
1899	<p>Will of Samuel Pennington, Jr.</p> <p>Will written March 28, 1899; proved August 1, 1899</p> <p>300-acre farm in St. Georges Hundred bequeathed to Franklin J. Pennington. Franklin must pay his sister, Cora Reynolds, \$5,000 plus interest from March 25, after Samuel's death</p> <p>NCC Will Book W-2:97</p>
1825	<p>Margaret B. Cochran, widow, to Samuel Pennington</p> <p>June 20, 1825; recorded July 29, 1825</p> <p>\$1</p> <p>1/3 interest in the 121 acres and 34 perches previously owned by Joseph Meldrum. With the death of Joseph Meldrum, 1/3 of the land descended to his sister, Rebecca, who married Samuel Pennington. Upon Rebecca's death, the 1/3 interest descended to Rebecca's daughter, Margaret B. Cochran (nee Pennington). Samuel Pennington purchased the 2/3 interest in this land in 1801.</p> <p>NCC Deed Book B-4:569</p>
1823	<p>Will of Samuel Pennington, Sr.</p> <p>Will written December 14, 1823; proved December 31, 1823</p> <p>Son, Samuel, receives 80 acres of Meldrum farm and adjoining 175 acres purchased from William Frazer. Daughter, Margaret B. Cochran, receives farm known as "Ledgefield," provided she quit claim her rights to Meldrum farm to her brother, Samuel.</p> <p>NCC Will Book S-2:9</p>
1801	<p>Benjamin and Elizabeth Flintham and Richard and Christiana Flintham, to Samuel Pennington of Cecil County, Maryland</p> <p>June 14, 1801; recorded August 14, 1801</p> <p>£969.15</p> <p>Undivided 2/3 part of 121 acres and 34 perches which was Joseph Meldrum's farm</p> <p>NCC Deed Book W-2:441</p>
1795	<p>Will of Sarah Meldrum</p> <p>Will written February 13, 1794; proved March 6, 1795</p> <p>Bequeath all of my property to son, Joseph</p> <p>NCC Will Book O-1:55</p>

Table 1 (continued)

DATE	TRANSACTION
1793	<p>Will of Robert Meldrum</p> <p>Will written August 19, 1793; proved August 31, 1793</p> <p>Wife, Sarah, to have use of landed estate or farm during her widowhood. Upon her death, entire farm is bequeathed to son, Joseph, at £6 per acre. Total amount of value to be equally divided among four children (Elizabeth, Kesia, Joseph, and Rebecca).</p> <p>NCC Will Book N-1:347</p>
1761	<p>Richard and Sarah Cantwell, and Lydia Cantwell, to Robert Meldrum</p> <p>August 15, 1761; recorded December 15, 1763</p> <p>£330.18.4</p> <p>Andrew Peterson died owning many tracts of land. Elinor Cantwell, wife of Richard, was one of Andrew Peterson's children. The estate of Andrew Peterson was divided on December 22, 1742, at which time 125 acres of woodland went to Richard Cantwell and his wife, Elinor. Both Richard and Elinor died intestate while still owning the parcel, leaving Richard and Lydia Cantwell as the only surviving heirs of Richard and Elinor Cantwell.</p> <p>NCC Deed Book W-1:94</p>

Robert Meldrum and his sister lost their father, John Meldrum, in 1749, when they were still children. The New Castle County Orphans' Court appointed Alexander Bryan to be Robert Meldrum's guardian. The guardian's account indicated that a balance of £105.16.9 and 3 farthings remained in John Meldrum's estate. Normally, the estate's balance was invested until the heirs came of age (NCC Orphans' Court Record C:137, 157).

In 1751, Robert Meldrum, then 14 years old, was bound to Robert Watts of Red Lion Hundred as an apprentice cordwainer (shoemaker). At the end of his apprenticeship, at age 21, Meldrum was to receive £4, or the tools of his trade and two suits of clothes (NCC Orphans' Court Record C-1:141). It is uncertain how Robert Meldrum afforded the purchase of the Cantwells' 125 acres in 1761, when he was just 24 years old and had come into such a small inheritance.

Robert Meldrum took an active role in his community as soon as he established his farm. Old Drawyers Church was the first Presbyterian church established in St. Georges Hundred. It served many of the Dutch settlers who had previously been members of the Dutch Reformed Church. The initial structure was built in 1711, but by 1760, the building had fallen into disrepair. Robert Meldrum was one of the people on the committee that collected funds for the rebuilding of the church. Meldrum donated £10 of his own money to the cause (Foot 1898:31-32). Bricks for the construction of the present church were reportedly fired in a brick kiln on Robert Meldrum's farm in 1769 (Foot 1898:30).

In 1782, Robert Meldrum was head of a household of nine. Meldrum's household consisted of two males over 18 years of age, one under 18, three females over 18, and three females under 18, a total of nine individuals (Hancock 1983:89). Robert Meldrum was able to rise to a much

higher station in life than that of a cordwainer. At the time of his death in August 1793, Robert Meldrum's personal property was valued at £617.9.4. Certain items in his inventory were associated with a high socioeconomic status, including a riding carriage, a mahogany card table, a walnut desk and table, teaware, silver spoons, and eight slaves, four of whom were children. He owned seven horses, a pair of oxen, 14 cows, 57 head of sheep, and pigs. Meldrum's crops included corn, wheat, rye, flax, and clover (NCC Inventory: Robert Meldrum).

Robert Meldrum and his wife, Sarah, had four children; Joseph, Elizabeth, Christiana (also known as Kesia), and Rebecca. Meldrum's will specified that his landed estate was to be used by his wife during her widowhood. Upon Sarah's death, Joseph was to receive the whole farm at a value of £6 per acre, with the stipulation that the total value be divided among the four children. Joseph was given four years from the time of his mother's death to pay his three sisters their shares (NCC Will Book N-1:347) (see Table 1).

Sarah Meldrum died in 1795, two years after her husband. Her will specified that all of her property was to go to her son, Joseph, who was approximately 20 years of age (NCC Will Book O-1:155). Joseph Meldrum owned the 125-acre farm for seven years, until he died intestate in 1801 (Tatnall Tombstone Collection n.d.). Some records refer to Joseph Meldrum as a Doctor of Medicine. At the time of Joseph Meldrum's death, his estate was valued at \$2,682.42. Some of the items inherited from his father seem to have remained in his possession, such as the walnut desk and table, mahogany card table, silver spoons, and seven African-Americans. Meldrum's wealth was concentrated in his crops and livestock. The livestock included six horses, 12 cows, 19 head of sheep, pigs, and poultry. He grew wheat, corn, rye, oats, flax, buckwheat, and beans (NCC Inventory File: Joseph Meldrum). Joseph Meldrum was buried in the Old Drawyers Church Cemetery near his father, Robert, mother, Sarah, and brother, John, who had died in 1792. In 1804, an account of Joseph Meldrum's estate prepared by Benjamin Flintham, his administrator and brother-in-law, revealed a balance of £1,430.19.9 remaining in the estate. To settle the estate, the balance was divided, and £475.1.7½ distributed to each of Joseph's sisters (NCC Inventory File: Joseph Meldrum).

In about 1801, Elizabeth Meldrum married Benjamin Flintham, Kesia Meldrum married Richard Flintham, Esquire, and Rebecca Meldrum married Samuel Pennington, a resident of Cecil County, Maryland (Marriage Catalog 1801). Because Joseph Meldrum died intestate and left no widow or children, his three sisters inherited the farm, described as 121 acres and 34 perches of land (NCC Deed Book W-2:441). In June 1801, Benjamin and Elizabeth Flintham, and Richard and Christiana Flintham, conveyed their respective shares in the Meldrum farm to their sister, Rebecca, and her husband, Samuel Pennington, for £969.15 (NCC Deed Book W-2:441) (see Table 1).

In 1804, Samuel Pennington was assessed taxes on 120 acres of land, 80 of which were improved. He owned a dwelling house, a kitchen, a barn, a stable, a crib, livestock, and four slaves, and his personal property was valued at \$328.22 (NCC Tax Assessments, St. Georges Hundred 1804). This tract of land and the buildings comprise the same property where Joseph Meldrum had lived, and are considered to be a significant number of buildings for a farm of the

period. In 1805, Samuel Pennington purchased 170 acres, for £775, from William and Mary Frazer, and William Clark Frazer and his wife, Susannah. This tract of land abutted the southern side of the former Meldrum farm and had been deeded to Mary Frazer by her mother, Veronica Peterson, the widow of Adam, Jr. (NCC Deed Book D-3:113). Pennington purchased another 34 acres in 1810. Known as "Hickory Town," this tract of land was bought from another daughter of Veronica Peterson, Letitia Clark, for \$864.37. It adjoined the western side of the Meldrum farm tract (NCC Deed Book I-3:432). This purchase created a farm of over 300 contiguous acres.

Rebecca Pennington died in 1802, at the age of 23 (Tatnall Tombstone Collection n.d.). Samuel Pennington married for a second time to a woman named Hannah, with whom he had three children: Margaret, Samuel, Jr., and John Augustine. Samuel Pennington's daughter, Margaret, married John T. Cochran, a neighboring landowner, in 1819 (Cochran Family Reunion Booklet 1986). John T. Cochran died in 1822; three years later, Margaret married merchant William Polk of Odessa (McCarter and Jackson 1882:429). By 1817, William Polk had moved to Cantwell's Bridge, where he had a large mercantile business specializing in the shipment of grain. William Polk retired from business in 1839, and died in 1852 (McCarter and Jackson 1882:429).

In 1816, Pennington was assessed tax on 200 acres with a wooden dwelling, a barn, and a stable, plus 60 acres of woodland, 20 acres of branch and cripple (wetlands), one house and lot in Middletown, and livestock valued at \$622. The 280-acre farm was valued at \$6,160 (NCC Tax Assessments, St. Georges Hundred 1816:89). In 1816, the mean number of acres per farm in St. Georges Hundred was 235, 22 percent of which was woodland (Herman et al. 1985:113). Although the size of Samuel Pennington's farm was considerably above average, his percentage of woodland was almost exactly 22 percent.

Samuel Pennington's second wife, Hannah, died on June 3, 1821, and was buried in the Old Drawyers Church Cemetery (Old Drawyers Church Tombstone Records n.d.). In the fall of 1822, Samuel Pennington took Eliza S. Armstrong as his third wife. Eliza and Samuel had one daughter, named Lavinia. Three years after their marriage, Samuel died (Old Drawyers Church Tombstone Records n.d.).

At the time of his death in 1823, Samuel Pennington was a large landholder. He bequeathed his 200-acre farm, known as "Ledgefield," to his daughter, Margaret, provided she give up her rights to her father's home farm, i.e., "Meldrum Farm." Samuel, Jr., received 80 acres of the "Meldrum Farm," plus the adjoining 175 acres his father had purchased from William Frazer (see Table 1). John Augustine received all of Samuel Pennington's real estate in Middletown, which consisted of a storehouse, dwelling, and carriagemaker's shop. Lavinia received a house and lot in Cantwell's Bridge. Samuel Pennington's will stipulated that his two sons were to have all of his bank stock, Lavinia was to receive \$4,000 annually from her brothers once she reached the age of 16, and all their father's personal property was to be sold and the proceeds divided between Samuel, Jr., and John Augustine. Samuel also stated his desire to continue the business partnership with his nephew, Augustine H. Pennington, and bequeathed the profits to his sons (NCC Will Book S-1:9).

The inventory of Samuel Pennington's estate was completed by neighbors, Outten Davis and Robert Cochran, in January 1824. Pennington's property was valued at \$3,576.99. A public sale was held on January 13, 1824, at which the household goods and farm equipment were sold (NCC Probate File: Samuel Pennington). The New Castle County Orphans' Court appointed Samuel Pennington's nephew and business partner, Augustine H. Pennington, to be the guardian of the minor children, Samuel, Jr., and John Augustine (NCC Orphans' Court Record L-1:264). Soon after Samuel's death, his children, John Augustine and Lavinia, died (NCC Chancery Case: Eliza Pennington vs. William Polk et al., 1829).

A description of Samuel Pennington's estate appears in an 1824 New Castle County Orphans' Court record to fulfill the requirements of the guardians overseeing the Pennington children's affairs. The "Meldrum Farm" and adjoining acreage were described as having a one-story log dwelling house and kitchen under one roof, with a small adjoining shed, a granary and barn with stables, and a smokehouse, all in a fair state of repair. A wagon house was in bad condition. The 150 acres of arable land were divided into five fields; there were 70 apple trees (many of which were on the decline), 30 peach trees, and a few cherry trees. The entire farm was listed as having an annual rental value of \$400 (NCC Orphans' Court Record L-1:336). In this period, these types of outbuildings were becoming more typical on larger farms.

Three years later, in 1827, the "Meldrum Farm" was again described in a New Castle County Orphans' Court record. At that time, the farm was in the tenure of Pere Hendrickson. It was described as having a one-story log dwelling house and attached kitchen in bad repair, with an adjoining log granary and an old shed. The wagon house, carriage house, and crib were also described as being in bad condition. A frame meat (smoke) house, a frame barn, and stables were in fair condition. The orchard consisted of 70 apple trees in a state of decline, and a few cherry trees. The annual rental value of the farm was estimated to be \$300, a 25 percent decline in value in three years (NCC Orphans' Court Record M-1:302).

In 1830, the commissioners of Samuel Pennington's estate reevaluated his landholdings. Much of the description is very similar to the 1827 description, except for the commissioners' suggestion that \$100 be spent to repair the roof, window sash, weatherboarding, and doors. It was also recommended that the farm be tilled, with one field planted in corn, two fields sowed with wheat, and one field planted with clover seed annually (NCC Orphans' Court Record N-1:400).

William Polk petitioned the New Castle County Orphans' Court on July 21, 1829, requesting that Samuel Pennington, Jr., receive, from his father's estate, the St. Georges Hundred farm with a annual rental value of \$600, and that William B. Janvier be appointed his guardian (NCC Orphans' Court Record N-1:250). The following day, the Orphans' Court approved William B. Janvier as Samuel Pennington, Jr.,'s guardian (NCC Orphans' Court Record N-1:250).

Prior to his marriage to Eliza S. Armstrong, Samuel Pennington had drafted a marriage contract stating that at his death, in lieu of her dower, Eliza was to receive \$200 each year she remained his widow. Samuel Pennington's nephew and business partner, Augustine, learned of the

marriage contract just before Samuel's death, but could not find it among Samuel's papers (NCC Chancery Case: Eliza Pennington vs. William Polk et al., 1829). Disregarding the marriage contract, Eliza filed in the New Castle County Orphans' Court for the one-third dower share in her husband's estate. Presumably, Eliza believed that the dower portion of her husband's estate was a far greater sum of money than she would earn from the \$200 her marriage contract would have allocated her annually. It appears that Eliza was thwarted in her attempts to receive her dower.

In 1829, Eliza Pennington brought suit against her stepdaughter and stepson-in-law, Margaret and William Polk, and her stepson, Samuel Pennington, Jr., *the remaining heirs of Samuel Pennington*. The chancery case dragged on for five years. Augustine Pennington, acting as the estate's executor, had apparently paid Eliza a portion of the money she was seeking, but in 1831, he requested that a contract be signed to pay her annually (NCC Chancery Case: Eliza Pennington vs. William Polk et al., 1829). Augustine was replaced as the estate's executor by Robert Polk. In February 1834, Robert Polk responded to Eliza's suit, stating that he believed that Eliza had destroyed the marriage contract to obtain her dower from the estate, and that neither Margaret, nor Samuel, Jr., had received any portion of their father's personal estate. Robert Polk claimed that Augustine Pennington still held a large portion of Samuel Pennington's personal estate, which prevented Polk from paying Eliza (NCC Chancery Case: Eliza Pennington vs. William Polk et al., 1829). In December 1834, a decree was issued by Chancellor Kensey Johns, Jr., awarding Eliza S. Pennington \$2,000, her annuity since her husband's death ten years before (NCC Chancery Case: Eliza Pennington vs. William Polk et al., 1829).

Samuel Pennington, Jr., reached his majority in 1836. By that year, he was living in the house and farming the land known as the "Meldrum Farm," which continued to have a log dwelling. In 1840, Samuel Pennington, Jr., was head of a household of four, consisting of three males and one female, plus two free African-American males, three free African-American females, and five people employed in agriculture. Samuel Pennington, Jr., and Mary Ball probably married in about 1842, when she was approximately 21 years old, since her eldest child, Ella, was eight years old in 1850 (Tatnall Tombstone Collection n.d.; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule 1850:177).

The 1849 Rea and Price map of St. Georges Hundred depicts S. Pennington as the only person occupying land on the northern side of the road leading from Middletown to Cantwell's Bridge, between the road leading to Thomas's Gristmill and Cantwell's Bridge. S. Pennington's residence was situated slightly to the northeast, across the road from R.S. Cochran's dwelling (Rea and Price 1849) (Figure 8).

In 1850, Samuel was head of a household of eight, which included himself; his wife, Mary; his daughter, Ella, who was eight years old; his son, Clarence, who was seven years old; his daughter, Cora, who was five years old; his son, Franklin, who was two years old; Hannah Euphron, a black female, 17 years old; and John Landry, a black laborer, 21 years old. His real estate was valued at \$23,500 (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule 1850:177). Pennington's farm had 100 improved acres, \$150 in tools, three horses, four milch cows, two

TABLE 2
AGRICULTURAL DATA, 1850-1880
LOCUST GROVE SITE (7NC-F-73)

OCCUPANT/YEAR	FARM SIZE	FARM/LIVESTOCK/ PRODUCTS VALUE	LIVESTOCK	FARM PRODUCTS
Samuel Pennington 1850	100 acres improved 0 acres unimproved	\$8,000/\$200	3 horses 4 milch cows 2 swine	275 bu. wheat 275 bu. corn 70 bu. Irish potatoes 208 lbs. butter
James P. Hoffecker Tenant 1860	300 acres improved 150 acres unimproved	\$30,000/\$2,000	11 horses 2 mules/asses 12 milch cows 2 oxen 20 other cattle 12 swine	800 bu. wheat 3,000 bu. corn 1,200 bu. oats 30 bu. Irish potatoes 10 bu. sweet potatoes 450 lbs. butter
Franklin J. Pennington Tenant 1870	270 acres improved 80 acres unimproved	\$40,000/\$2,000/\$7,048	12 horses 2 mules/asses 6 milch cows 2 oxen 12 other cattle 13 swine	720 bu. wheat 3,000 bu. corn 100 bu. Irish potatoes \$3,000 orchard products 300 lbs. butter 6 tons hay
Franklin J. Pennington Tenant 1880	370 acres improved 50 acres unimproved	\$25,000/\$1,500/\$2,000	9 horses 2 mules/asses 9 milch cows 2 oxen 5 other cattle 16 swine 25 poultry	900 bu. wheat 2,000 bu. corn 1,000 bu. oats 30 bu. potatoes 50 apple trees 4,000 peach trees 200 lbs. butter

value of this farm was assessed at \$8,850, while the total, including buildings, was valued at \$15,050 (NCC Tax Assessments, St. Georges Hundred 1849-1853).

Two of Samuel and Mary's children died before they reached maturity. A daughter, Mary, died in 1849, at the age of three, and their son, Clarence, died in 1854, at age 11 (Old Drawyers Church Tombstone Records n.d.). By 1860, Samuel Pennington, Jr., and his family were living in Middletown. Samuel was head of a household of 11, which included himself (43 years of age); his wife, Mary (38 years of age); daughter, Ella (19 years of age); daughter, Cora (16 years of age); son, Franklin (12 years of age); son, Frederick (10 years of age); daughter, Kate (7 years of age); daughter, Laura (1 year of age); and two black males and one black female. Pennington's occupation was listed as farmer, and the value of his real estate was estimated to be \$60,000 (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule 1860:810).

TABLE 3

AGGREGATE AGRICULTURAL DATA
ST. GEORGES HUNDRED, 1850-1880

YEAR	AVERAGE FARM SIZE	AVERAGE PERCENTAGE IMPROVED ACRES	AVERAGE FARM/ LIVESTOCK VALUE	PERCENTAGE FARMS W/LIVESTOCK	AVERAGE NUMBER LIVESTOCK	PERCENTAGE FARMS W/CROPS	AVERAGE AMOUNT PRODUCTS
1850	214 acres	88%	\$10,674/\$585	98% horses 12% mules/asses 98% milch cows 35% oxen 82% other cattle 15% sheep 95% swine	5 horses 3 mules/asses 6 milch cows 3 oxen 7 other cattle 22 sheep 8 swine	89% wheat 98% corn 83% oats 1% peas/beans 88% potatoes 7% buckwheat 11% orchards 53% hay 14% clover seed 1% flax seed	415 bu. wheat 1,287 bu. corn 748 bu. oats 65 bu. potatoes 18 bu. buckwheat \$110 orchards 18 tons hay 10 bu. clover seed 3 bu. flax seed 468 lbs. butter
1860	226 acres	86%	\$15,512/\$1,256	99% horses 24% mules/asses 100% milch cows 70% oxen 93% other cattle 12% sheep 99% swine	7 horses 3 mules/asses 8 milch cows 3 oxen 9 other cattle 31 sheep 11 swine	98% wheat 100% corn 98% oats 1% peas/beans 95% potatoes 1% buckwheat 2% barley 2% orchards 15% sweet potatoes 64% hay 13.5% clover seed	759 bu. wheat 1,315 bu. corn 1,049 bu. oats 85 bu. Irish potatoes \$337.50 orchards 38 bu. sweet potatoes 18 tons hay 17 bu. clover seed 447 lbs. butter

Table 3 (continued)

YEAR	AVERAGE FARM SIZE ACRES	AVERAGE PERCENTAGE IMPROVED ACRES	AVERAGE FARM/ LIVESTOCK VALUE	PERCENTAGE FARMS W/LIVESTOCK	AVERAGE NUMBER LIVESTOCK	PERCENTAGE FARMS W/CROPS	AVERAGE AMOUNT PRODUCTS
1870	207 acres	89%	\$23,448/\$1,775	98% horses 41% mules/asses 93% milch cows 50% oxen 74% other cattle 11% sheep 94% swine	7 horses 3 mules/asses 6 milch cows 3 oxen 6 other cattle 32 sheep 9 swine	92.5% wheat 95% corn 57% oats 1% barley 16% peas/beans 94.5% Irish potatoes 42% sweet potatoes 71% orchards 81% hay 20% clover seed 12% mkt. gard.	687 bu. wheat 1,104 bu. corn 569 bu. oats 5 bu. peas/beans 134 bu. Irish potatoes 25 bu. sweet potatoes \$1,461 orchards 18 tons hay 9 bu. clover seed \$395 mkt. gard. 329 lbs. butter
1880	190 acres	92%	\$12,855	90% horses 36% mules/asses 95% milch cows 27% oxen 68% other cattle 15% sheep 89% swine 90% poultry	6 horses 3 mules/asses 7 milch cows 2 oxen 5 other cattle 44 sheep 9 swine 40 poultry	82% wheat 87% corn 73% oats 79% hay 28% clover seed 58% Irish potatoes 11% sweet potatoes 70% orchards	679 bu. wheat 1,293 bu. corn 159 bu. oats 26 tons hay 12 bu. clover seed 72 bu. Irish potatoes 32 bu. sweet potatoes 56 apple trees 3,132 peach trees 455 lbs. butter 4,269 gal. milk 176 doz. eggs

An examination of grantor and grantee indexes indicates that both Samuel Pennington, Sr., and Samuel Pennington, Jr., had purchased and conveyed a great deal of real estate. As early as 1808, Samuel Pennington, Sr., purchased "Ledgefield" (NCC Deed Book F-3:425). As late as 1872, Samuel Pennington, Jr., purchased 249 acres, known as "Prairie Farm," near Choptank Road (NCC Deed Book O-9:241). Despite these large farm purchases, the majority of the parcels the Penningtons purchased and conveyed were lots in the village of Middletown.

Since Pennington was living in Middletown by 1860, it is believed that a tenant was farming the land situated on the northern side of the road from Middletown to Odessa which included the land known as the "Meldrum Farm." In order to determine who was farming Pennington's land, R.A. Cochran and W.A. Cochran, his neighbors for many years, were located in the 1860 agricultural schedule, and then the names of the surrounding farmers who were not real estate owners were examined. From this process it was deduced that James P. Hoffecker may have been farming Pennington's 300-acre farm, 150 acres of which were improved. Hoffecker's farm, which was valued at \$30,000, nearly double the average for St. Georges Hundred (see Table 3), had 11 horses, two mules, 12 milch cows, two working oxen, 20 other cattle, and 12 swine, and produced 800 bushels of wheat, 1,200 bushels of oats, 30 bushels of Irish potatoes, 3,000 bushels of Indian corn, 10 bushels of sweet potatoes, and 450 pounds of butter (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Schedule 1860:22) (see Table 2). In most categories of livestock and farm products, Hoffecker's farm was well above average.

During the Civil War, both Samuel Pennington, Jr., and his son, Franklin, served their country in Middletown's Company I, under Lieutenant Morgan. Samuel was a captain, and Franklin a "fifer," each for a nine-month term (Civil War Service Records). After his Civil War service, Samuel Pennington continued to reside in Middletown, while his son, Franklin, farmed the 300 acres of land on the road from Middletown to Odessa. Although Franklin may have been farming the 300 acres of land, the 1868 Beers *Atlas of the State of Delaware* continues to depict Captain S. Pennington on the property, since he remained the owner. It is in this atlas that Samuel Pennington's farm is first referred to as "Locust Grove," the derivation of which is unknown (Beers 1868:plate 31) (Figure 9).

Sometime between 1870 and 1880, a large Second Empire-style section was added to the existing Greek Revival-style farmhouse known as Locust Grove. The size, the ornamental detail, and the section's prominent placement facing the road exhibit Pennington's continued financial success and his desire to illustrate his achievements. Interior arrangements, such as the center-hall plan and separated service areas, exemplify the changing attitudes toward domestic space relationships which were occurring on a widespread basis throughout St. Georges Hundred during this period (Kise, Franks & Straw 1994).

In 1870, Samuel Pennington, Jr., was head of a household of 11, which included himself (53 years of age); his wife, Mary (49 years of age); son, Frederick (20 years of age); daughter, Kate (18 years of age); daughter, Laura (11 years of age); son, Wilmer (9 years of age); one white domestic servant named Sally Henry; one black domestic servant named Elizabeth Brisco; one black waiter named Walter Lamer; and two black farm laborers (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule 1870:715).

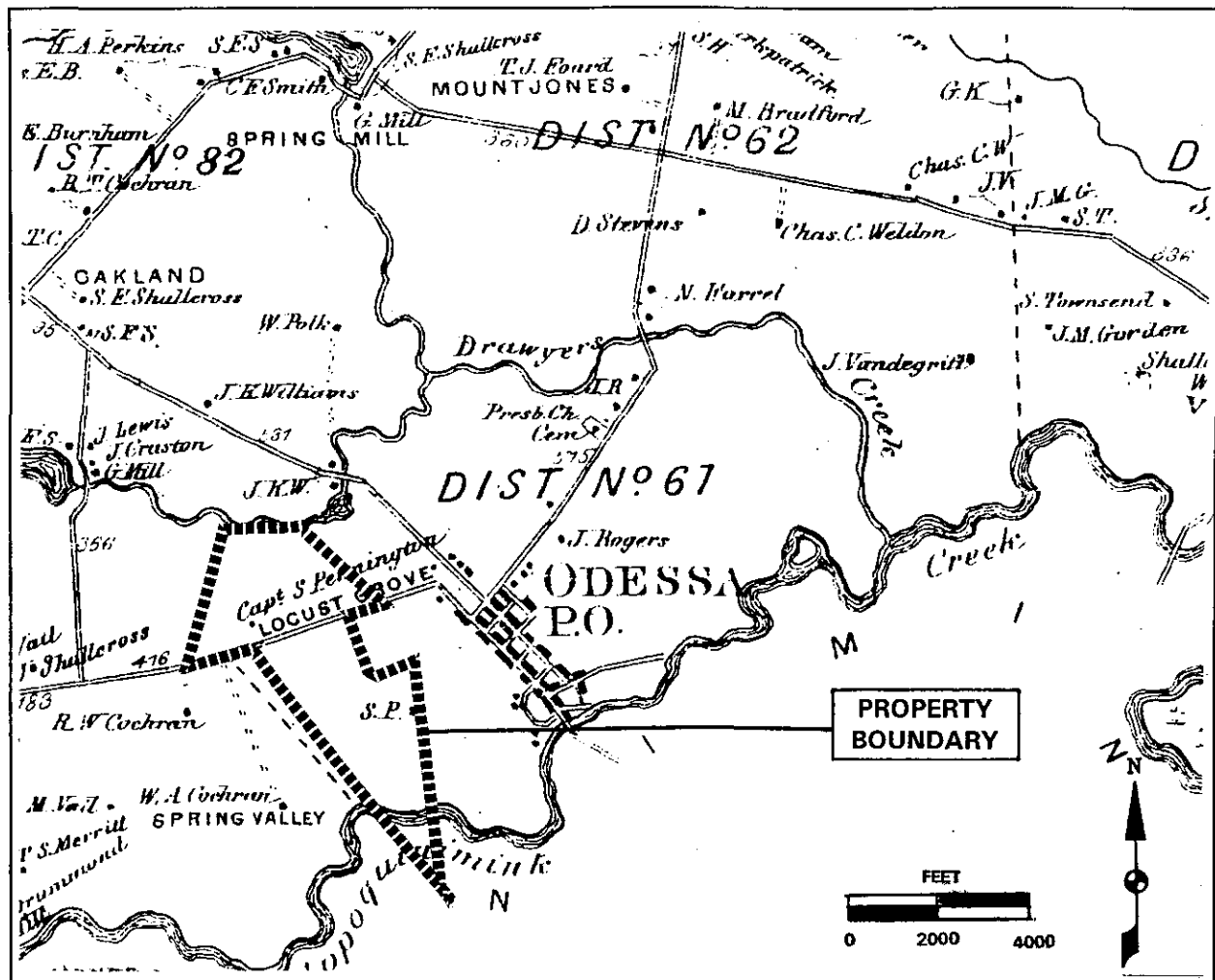


FIGURE 9: Project Area in 1868

Source: Beers 1868

Although Franklin Pennington was enumerated in the household of Charles Polk in the 1870 population schedule, he was listed in the agricultural schedule as farming 270 improved acres and 80 unimproved acres in St. Georges Hundred. Since W.A. Cochran was listed as the owner of the neighboring farm, it is suspected that Franklin was farming his father's 300-acre farm. In that year, Franklin Pennington's real estate was valued at \$40,000, while his personal estate was listed at \$1,000. His farm consisted of 12 horses, two mules, six milch cows, 12 other cattle, two working oxen, and 13 swine, and produced 720 bushels of wheat, 3,000 bushels of Indian corn, 100 bushels of Irish potatoes, six tons of hay, 300 pounds of butter, and \$3,000 in orchard products (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Schedule 1870:9) (see Table 2). Like Hoffecker's farm in 1860, Franklin Pennington's agricultural operation in 1870 was obviously successful and was well above the average for St. Georges Hundred, in terms of farm value as well as in the number of animals and amount of farm products (see Tables 2 and 3). Like other farmers in Delaware during this period, Pennington had evidently converted some of the land he was farming to orchards, probably hoping to take advantage of the boom in peach production.

Eliza S. Pennington, the third wife of Samuel Pennington, Sr., died in September 1873, at the age of 76, and was buried at the Old Drawyers Church Cemetery (Old Drawyers Church Tombstone Records n.d.). Samuel Pennington, Jr.,'s wife, Mary Pennington, died in 1874, at the approximate age of 51 (Tatnall Tombstone Collection n.d.). It appears that two years after the death of Mary, Samuel Pennington, Jr., who was 59 years of age, married a woman named Elizabeth J. Burnham.

In 1880, at the age of 31, Franklin J. Pennington married Geneva Wilson, and took up residence on Samuel Pennington's recently improved farm known as "Locust Grove." Being newly married, Franklin and Geneva did not have any children, but in that year they are enumerated with eight servants in their household (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule 1880:E.D. 29, Supervisor District 16). Franklin's farm and buildings were valued at \$25,000. The farm was comprised of 370 improved acres and 50 acres of woodland. He owned nine milch cows, nine horses, two mules, two oxen, five other cattle, 16 swine, and 25 poultry, and produced 2,000 bushels of Indian corn, 30 bushels of Irish potatoes, 900 bushels of wheat, 1,000 bushels of oats, 100 bushels of apples, 15 bushels of peaches, and 200 pounds of butter (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Schedule 1880:E.D. 29, Supervisor District 16).

In 1880, Samuel Pennington, Jr. (62 years of age), continued to live in Middletown with his wife, Elizabeth J. (40 years of age); daughter, Cora (20 years of age); son, Wilmer (19 years of age); a black female cook; and two black male farmhands (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule 1880:E.D. 36, Supervisor District 16). The following year, Captain S. Pennington appears in the Hopkins *Atlas of New Castle County, Delaware* as owning 275 acres, and Franklin is listed as the owner of the residence (Hopkins 1881). In 1893, despite the fact that Franklin had been living at this location for some time, only Captain S. Pennington is listed in Baist's atlas as the owner (Baist 1893:15) (Figure 10).

Samuel Pennington, Jr., died in 1899. In his will he bequeathed \$5,000, in lieu of a dower, to his wife, Elizabeth J., as set out in the provisions of a marriage contract entered into between them on October 7, 1876. From his father's estate, Franklin J. Pennington received the 300-acre farm situated on both sides of the road from Middletown to Odessa, which he and his wife, Geneva, already occupied. It was stipulated that Franklin must pay his sister, Cora Reynolds, \$5,000 with interest (see Table 1). Samuel Pennington, Jr., bequeathed his 249-acre farm on Choptank Road to his son, Wilmer, provided he paid \$4,000 to Cora Reynolds. Samuel's daughter, Kate Crouch, wife of John S. Crouch, received all of her father's real estate in Middletown situated east of the Delaware Railroad, with the provision that Kate must pay her sister, Ella Cochran, \$2,000. Ella Cochran received all of her father's farm and property in Middletown situated west of the Delaware Railroad. Laura West, wife of Frank C. West, received Samuel's farm in Kent County, Maryland, known as "Vienna." Samuel Pennington's will specified that his executors, John S. Crouch and Franklin, should sell his personal estate and divide the money between the six children (NCC Will Book W-2:97).

An inventory of the personal estate of Samuel Pennington, Jr., was prepared by Samuel M. Reynolds and Alexander M. Brown in August 1899. At that time, his personal property consisted

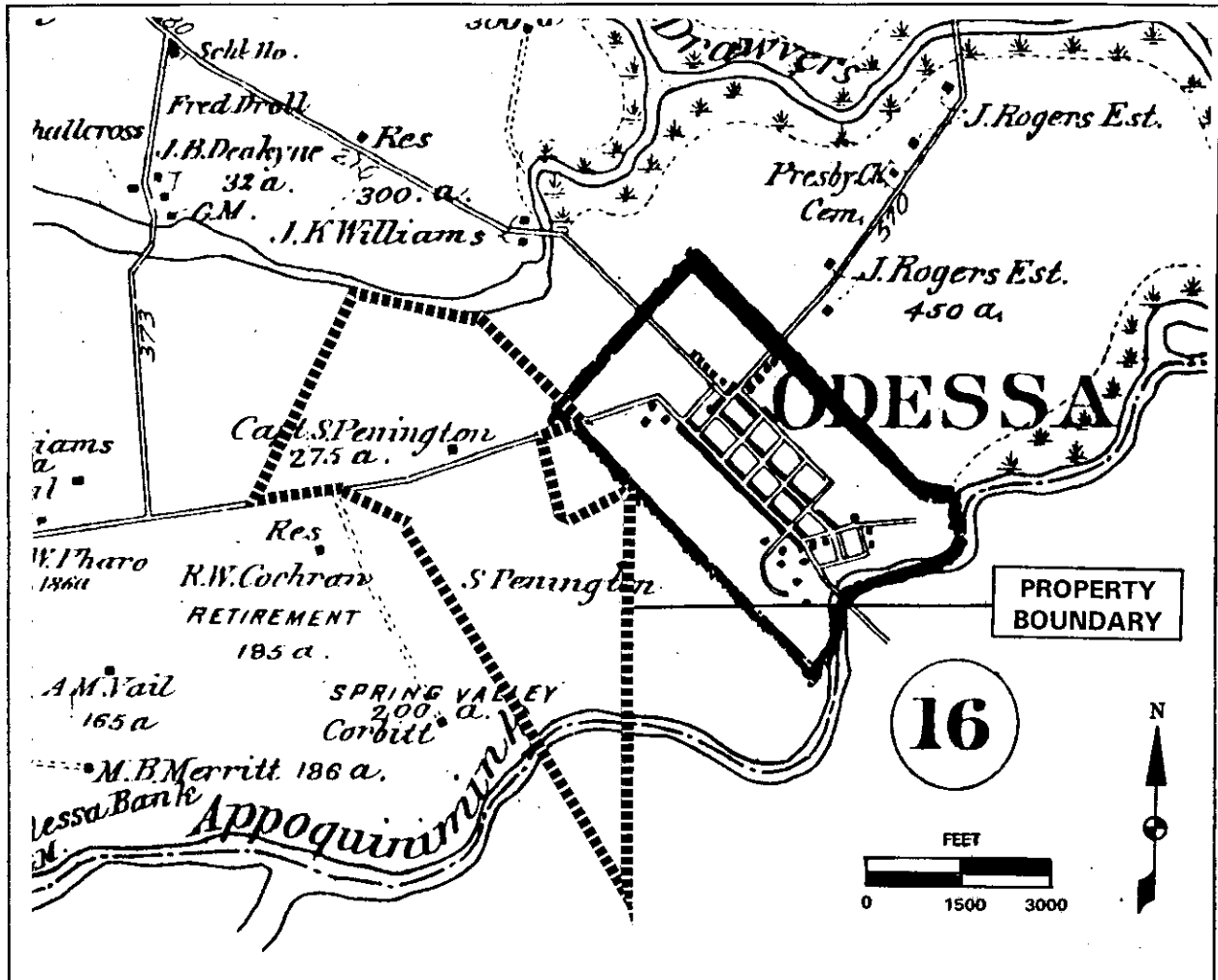


FIGURE 10: Project Area in 1893

Source: Baist 1893

of many objects which reflected the status he had achieved within his lifetime: a piano, an organ, two carriages, one dearborn, and a walnut bedroom suite, as well as stock in the National Bank of Odessa and the National Bank of Middletown, Delaware Railroad stock, and huge sums of wheat and corn from various farms such as his home farm, the farm known as F.J. Pennington's, the farm known as Wilmer C. Pennington's, and his farm in Kent County, Maryland. The total value of the personal property was listed at \$25,619.43. Pennington's creditors were paid out of this sum. Elizabeth J. Pennington received a large payment of \$7,000 from the estate which was classified as a judgment, plus \$500, called a legacy. Once all of his creditors were paid, \$9,070.53 was left to be divided among Pennington's six children (NCC Probate Record: Samuel Pennington, Jr.). It is apparent that even though Samuel Pennington, Sr., had been a well-respected man with a fair amount of wealth, his son, Samuel Pennington, Jr., far exceeded him in real estate holdings and prosperity.

On May 12, 1900, Franklin J. Pennington paid his sister, Cora Reynolds, \$5,039.17, which was the payment of \$5,000 plus interest specified in his father's will (NCC Deed Book H-18:34) (see

Table 1). The children of Franklin and Geneva Pennington were Addie P. Voshell, Madeline P. Bates, Emma P. Richards, and William Lee Pennington. In 1926, Franklin J. Pennington died at the age of 82. In his will, he bequeathed his entire estate to his wife, Geneva, for her widowhood.

Geneva Pennington died October 28, 1936, leaving her entire estate to her children. Her will, which was proved in January 1937, appointed Francis M. Richards, her son-in-law, as her executor. The total sum of the inventory of Geneva's estate was \$994.16, which consisted of a farm account; 633 bushels of corn, which were sold to the Crothers Brothers of Mount Pleasant, Delaware, for \$550.71; and an unspecified amount of furniture and jewelry. The fair market value of Geneva's house was assessed at \$5,000, but it was noted that she had a mortgage of \$3,800. At the time of her death, Geneva owned a three-story frame dwelling at 124 South Broad Street in Middletown, which was valued at \$2,400. It is not known whether Geneva's house in Middletown, or the farmhouse owned by her husband, Franklin, is the property referred to as Geneva's house. It is also not known which property was the one mortgaged (NCC Will Record No. 20405).

During Franklin Pennington's occupation and ownership of Locust Grove, the house and lands fell into disrepair. On January 11, 1939, William Lee and Harriet Pennington, and Emma P. and Francis Richards, the heirs of Franklin Pennington, conveyed a 222-acre farm situated on the northern side of the road from Middletown to Odessa (in this transaction referred to as Route 299) to Walter C. Guseman of Cecil County, Maryland, for \$9,500 (NCC Deed Book D-41:551). Walter C. and Thelma Guseman conveyed the same land to their son, Walter C., and his wife, Lavina Guseman, for \$10 in 1968, with the exception of 0.5 acres (NCC Deed Book U-81:128). In 1974, the Gusemans subdivided the farm. A result of this subdivision was that the dwelling known as Locust Grove and all the associated farm buildings which remained were now located on a 3.595-acre parcel known as Lot 1 (NCC Subdivision Map #5482). Six years later, Walter and Lavina Guseman conveyed the 3.595-acre parcel (also known as Tax Parcel 13-023.00-084) to Wallace I. Harris, Jr., and his wife, Ruth, for \$60,000 (NCC Deed Book R-109:83) (see Table 1).

It is reported that Wallace Harris re-landscaped the property and installed an in-ground swimming pool (Kise, Franks & Straw 1994). In 1993, Wallace Harris and his wife, Ruth, sold the 3.595-acre property to the State of Delaware for \$225,000 (NCC Deed Book 1604:097). In 1994, Locust Grove was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. It has also been suggested that Locust Grove be included in the *Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred (1830-1899)* thematic nomination (Herman et al. 1985).